

VZCZCXRO9909
OO RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC
DE RUEHBJ #0366/01 0430951
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 120951Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2260
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0248
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4496
RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE 0166
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6822
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2099

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 000366

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [SU](#) [ZI](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 12 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: TIBET, ICC INDICTMENT,
UNHRC, ART FROM THE BOXER REBELLION

11. Key points at the February 12 MFA Press Briefing:

-- Tibet is a matter of China's internal affairs and has been a part of China since the 13th century. China continues to strive to improve its system of regional autonomy and to safeguard the interests of all ethnic groups.

-- The Chinese Government hopes that the ICC indictment of Sudanese President Bashir will be a means of increasing stability in Sudan and Darfur. All parties, including the Sudanese Government, have made positive efforts.

-- The UN Human Rights Council's review of China's human rights record was undertaken in a positive manner, and only a few countries attempted to politicize the situation and "make groundless accusations."

-- VISITS: Pakistan President Asif Zardari will visit China February 20-23. His visit will include Hubei Province and Shanghai.

Dalai Lama and Tibet

12. Tibet, which has been a part of China since ancient times, is currently a matter of China's internal affairs, spokesperson Jiang Yu said during the regularly scheduled MFA press conference February 12. In response to multiple questions on Tibet, Jiang said that China has had effective jurisdiction over Tibet since the Yuan dynasty in the 13th century, and Tibet has therefore never been an independent state. She noted this year marks the 50th anniversary since the implementation of democratic reforms in Tibet and said that there have been vast improvements in the social system including the abandonment of serfdom, a development similar to when America and the EU nations abandoned slavery. Tibetans have full rights under the constitution, and the Tibetan people have observed and benefitted from the changes in Tibetan society and political and economic situations, she said. Tibet has a harmonious society with a developing economy. "I wonder why serf owners have suddenly become human rights activists," Jiang said. She noted that the "Dalai issue" is neither religious nor ethnic, but rather is a matter of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese Government will "never bend to foreign pressure," she said, adding that China will continue to improve the system of regional autonomy and to safeguard the interests of all ethnic groups.

13. In response to repeated questions on the restrictions that foreign journalists face in travelling both to Tibet and to ethnic Tibetan areas, Jiang directed the questioners to local authorities. She added that the restrictions are in place to help safeguard social stability in Tibet. In response to repeated questions regarding the Dalai Lama's statement that Tibet is "tense" and that another uprising may be "imminent," Jiang said that the situation in Tibet is stable, and that the incidents of March 14th have been

dealt with in accordance with Chinese law. China will continue to "support Tibetan areas" while taking measures to ensure stability.

ICC and Bashir

¶4. Asked about the International Criminal Court's indictment of Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, Jiang responded that while she has not read media reports on the indictment, she hopes that the actions taken will increase stability in Sudan and Darfur. She noted that there has been great progress in the region, and that all parties involved, including the Sudanese Government, have made positive efforts. She encouraged the continued use of the tripartite mechanism, involving the UN, the African Union and the Sudanese Government, to effectively promote the peace process.

Swearing in of Tsvangirai

¶5. Regarding the election of Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, Jiang said that the swearing in of the National Unity Government reflects substantial progress towards political reconciliation. China congratulates the new government and especially appreciates the efforts of African nations, particularly the South African Development Community.

UN Human Rights Review of China

¶6. Regarding the UN Human Rights Council's review of China, Jiang said that the review was generally undertaken in a spirit of

BEIJING 00000366 002 OF 002

cooperation, and that the majority of countries maintained a positive view of the situation. A small number of countries attempted to politicize the situation and "made groundless accusations," she said. The Chinese delegation described the "remarkable progress" in human rights in China and maintained an open and frank attitude "of which many countries approved," she said. China will continue to make "unremitting efforts" in the area of human rights, she added.

Art Stolen During the Boxer Rebellion

¶7. In response to a question regarding the potential auction of art from the Yves Saint Laurent estate that was originally taken from the Summer Palace by French soldiers after the Boxer Rebellion, Jiang said that the art was stolen by foreign intruders in the 20th century and should be returned to China. She noted that the war in question offended the Chinese people and expressed hope that the relevant countries would take a "cautious attitude."

Other Issues

¶8. Asked about the "Buy America" provisions of the U.S. economic stimulus plan, Jiang directed the questioner to the Ministry of Commerce. Asked a question about Chinese President Hu Jintao's upcoming trip to Africa, Jiang responded that the trip is intended to increase friendly cooperation, and that the delegation will release information as it becomes available. Regarding the upcoming Six-Party Talks working group meeting on the Northeast Asian Peace and Security Mechanism in Moscow, Jiang directed the questioner to authorities in Moscow. Regarding the return of the Chinese fishing vessel that was abducted by Somali pirates, Jiang directed the questioner to the company which owns the boat.

¶9. VISITS: Pakistan President Asif Zardari will visit China February 20-23. His visit will include Hubei Province and Shanghai. This visit will be Zardari's second in four months and will include a visit to various projects, including a water resource project, an agricultural development and a "finance" project. The visit is intended to deepen the friendly cooperation that already exists between China and Pakistan.

